Supplement to "IN TOWN,"
Xmas, 1895.

FEMINA FURENS

BY

Sir Walter Besant.

With Thirteen Illustrations
by W. DEWAR.

NOTICE! NOTICE!! NOTICE!!!

The latest date upon which the books will be received from Competitors will be December 10th, 1895.

MELLIN'S PAINTING COMPETITION.

Total Value of Prizes,

£105.

THE Proprietor of MELLIN'S FOOD FOR INFANTS AND INVALIDS is willing to send to applicants a copy of **"MELLIN'S PAINTING BOOK,"** with full particulars of the above competition. It is desirable, to avoid disappointment, that early application be made, as letters will be attended to in their regular order according to the date of receipt.

THE PRIZES WILL BE AS FOLLOWS:—

One Prize of £20 for the Best Coloured Book.—Open to all.

Two Prizes of £10 each for the Two next Best Coloured Books. Open to children not exceeding 18 years of age.

Three Prizes of £5 each for the Three next Best Coloured Books. Open to children not exceeding 15 years of age.

Ten Prizes of £2 10s. each for the Ten next Best Coloured Books. Open to children not exceeding 12 years of age.

Fifty Prizes consisting of either a **well-dressed Doll** or a **Box of Tools,** at the option of the successful Competitor, for the Fifty next Best Coloured Books. Open to little folks not exceeding 9 years of age.

Address, enclosing 1d. to cover postage, "PAINTING BOOK DEPT.,"

MELLIN'S FOOD WORKS, PECKHAM, LONDON, S.E.

Copyright
strictly reserved.

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2025

https://archive.org/details/feminafurens00besa

Femina Furens.

Two young women, both very much like each other, being sisters with only a year or two of difference in age, only that one was much darker than the other, were sitting at a table, opening, reading, and destroying letters.

"No woman could endure it!" said one—the elder—the one with a wedding ring—the darker of the two—the girl with black eyes and wavy black hair—the more passionate-looking of the two; and, at this moment, one was full of hatred and revenge and spitefulness and wrath unspeakable.

"Yet, to leave him! Oh, my dear Isabel! to give him up altogether!"

"It tears my heart—" As she spoke she tore up another letter from her husband, then her lover. "But he laughs at me. He writes affectionate letters—I have read them on his study table—to his students (the 'sweet girl graduates,' he calls them).

Isabel.

My dear Claire, never, *never,* NEVER marry a man"—she tore with increasing vigour and intensity—"who teaches science at a girls' college; for his mind is always running on his girls. And the last outrage—oh!"

"What did he do last?"

"There! a red-haired girl—oh! I hate red hair—an intriguing, crafty, false, treacherous—oh!——"

"Go on, Isabel. What has he done?"

"He raves about her hair and her cheek. What has a married man to do with another woman's hair and cheek? Is not my hair good enough for him?"

"Isabel, you may leave him, but you will want to go back to him next week!"

"Never! I hate, I detest, I loathe the man, as much as ever I loved him. Claire, I have made up my mind. You and I will go away together. There is no reason why we should stay in London. We have got enough to live upon. We will go to some quiet place, and live secluded. If he tries to find us out—well, he may succeed. You shall take my name, and I will take yours: that will throw people off the scent. I have written to tell him. My boxes are packed. I shall take every single thing that belongs to me. As for the wedding presents, I have broken as many as could be broken; they are all piled in a heap in the bed-room. And now that I have destroyed all the letters, there is nothing left to do. Come, Claire."

"Ugh! Isabel, I will do anything you wish. I always have. You are so headstrong. But to leave your husband—oh! and only on suspicion!"

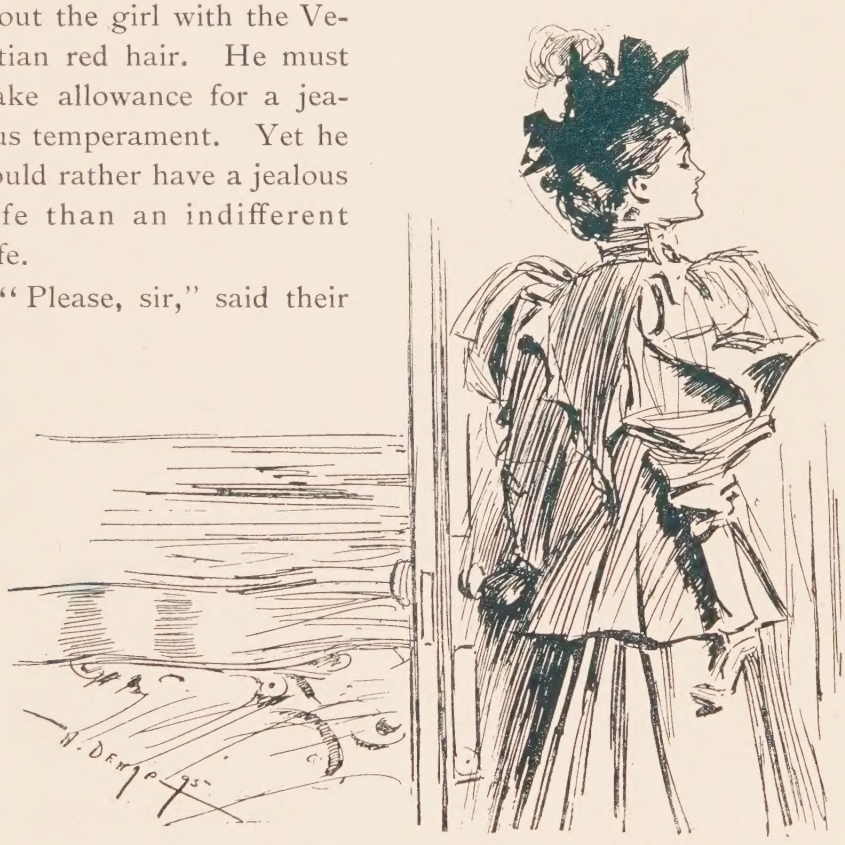
"No; certainty! Come, Claire. My mind is quite made up." She looked all round in search of something more to

smash, and finding nothing, sailed majestically out of the room. When Isabel said that her mind was made up, no one who knew her ever ventured a word of remonstrance. For it was a mind of granite.

* * * * * * *

The husband came home to the flat at six o'clock. He was quite cheerful, and intended to take his wife for a walk in the park before dinner. As for her little burst of jealousy, that was all over. Besides, he had been foolish to talk so much about the girl with the Venetian red hair. He must make allowance for a jealous temperament. Yet he would rather have a jealous wife than an indifferent wife.

"Please, sir," said their



Sailed majestically out of the room.

one servant, producing a letter, "Missus has gone, and would I give you this? And please, sir, she's smashed most everything with the poker, sir."

The husband took the letter, and opened it.

"Frank," it said, "I am leaving you for ever. Don't try to find me. Go your own way. Enjoy the contemplation of your red-haired girl. I have quite resolved never again to return to you, or to suffer any longer the humiliations you have laid upon me.—ISABEL."

"The devil!" said Frank. "Humiliations? What humiliations? Just because I admired a girl's red hair! Oh, ridiculous!"

He looked into the drawing-room. Things were in a frightful mess—pictures taken down; all the pretty things gone; the books taken out of the gaping shelves. He looked into the dining-room. There were exhibited similar evidences of feminine wrath. He looked into the bed-room. On the bed lay the wedding presents. Those that could be broken—such as statuettes, mirrors, Venetian glass, carved work, and so forth—were broken; things that would not be broken, like silver teapots, were hammered and beaten out of shape; embroidered cloths were cut, pictures hacked; nothing was left.

"My word!" said the husband. "I knew she was jealous, but—there!"

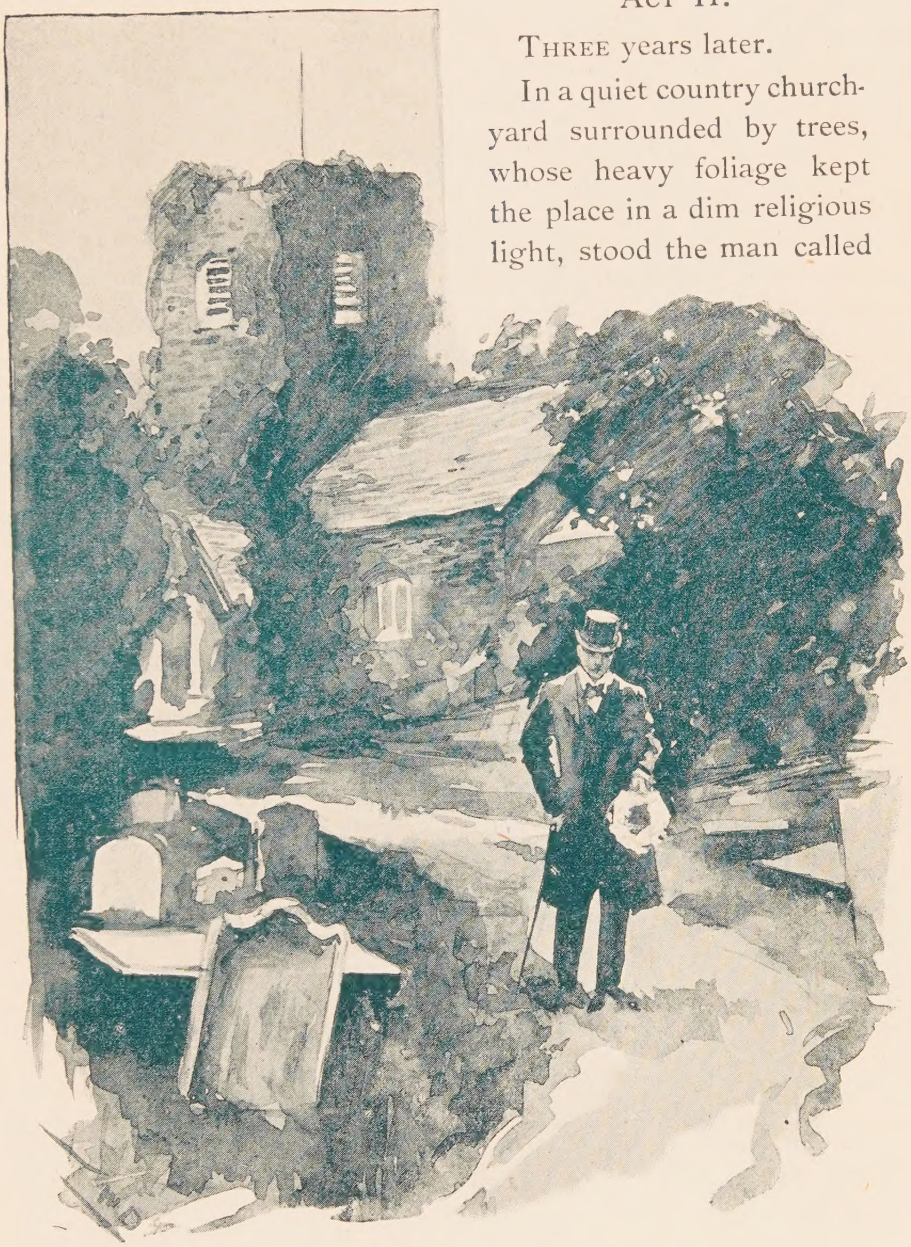
Then he went out, slamming the door.

"I to look after you?" he said. "I to inquire after you? I to want you back again? Never! Go, for a jealous, revengeful, spiteful, evil-minded devil! By George! I am almost sorry I never gave you any cause for jealousy. Come back again, and I will!"

Act II.

Three years later.

In a quiet country churchyard surrounded by trees, whose heavy foliage kept the place in a dim religious light, stood the man called



In a quiet country churchyard surrounded by trees.

A lady in deep mourning was coming out of the church.

Frank. It was a summer morning, about noon; the birds were quiet, save for an occasional cry from the thick shadows of some deep-leaved elm. He looked across the churchyard, shading his eyes. He wore a hat-band, and in his hand he carried a white wreath.

"The old woman said it was in the corner," he murmured, and began to make his way, stepping between the green mounds—those below feel not the footstep, yet he was loth to step upon the graves—towards the south-east corner of the churchyard, the place where the shadows were deepest and the graves the fewest. As he passed the south porch a lady in deep mourning was coming out of the church; at sight of him she shrank back and returned quickly. Standing at a window, the lowest diamond panes of which she could just reach, the woman looked out and watched the man.

He arrived at the corner of the churchyard. There, on a small white marble cross, he read the words, "Sacred to the memory of Isabel, wife of Frank Empride, M.A., F.R.S., who died July the 3rd, 1895, at Ivy Cottage, of this parish, aged twenty-two years."

The man sat down on another monument and gazed at the marble cross. It was erected to the memory of his wife.

"If he would only cry!" murmured the woman. "If he would only cry!"

He did not cry. His face grew harder as he looked upon the cross.

"He is harder than me," she said. "Oh! I will wait—I will wait my time."

Thus, though the pane of glass—good thick glass, too—and sixty feet of churchyard were between the man and the woman watcher, she was perfectly able to read his thoughts, which were to this effect:

"You were an ill-tempered, evil-conditioned woman. You were always jealous

The man sat down and gazed at the marble cross.

of every other woman. You had a malignant disposition. You had a cruel tongue. You had nothing to recommend you except your good looks, for which I married you; your taste in dress, which was very fine; your few thousands, which enabled you to gratify that taste. Every other woman hated you. Tell me, now that you are gone to make things unpleasant in another world—why—why—why I should regret you? I was not sorry when you went away—I have never wished you back. Now that you are gone, I shall marry again."

"Oh! my time will come," murmured the woman in black.

"I put on a hat-band, thinking it decent. It isn't decent, it's hypocritical."

He took off his hat, and with his pen-knife cut off the hat-band and threw it on the grass.

"My time—my chance—will come." The woman watcher clenched her fingers and went on gazing.

"I brought this wreath, thinking it decent. It isn't decent, it's hypocritical. You shan't have it." He stepped back and laid the wreath on the newly-made grave of a child. "There, poor self-tormenting visage. Happily for you, there is neither marrying nor giving in marriage where you are gone. Therefore, no room for jealousy."

So without bestowing any further looks upon the marble cross, he stepped lightly and cheerfully, and joyously away.

The woman watched him from her window. Her cheek was flaming, her eyes were bright and fierce. "I will wait," she said. "I will wait."

At the hill gate, Frank found, still sitting on the stone, the old woman who had directed him to the grave.

"So," he said, giving her a shilling, "I found the place. "Did you know the lady who is buried there?"

"Did you know the lady who is buried there?"

"Oh! yes, sir. I knew her well. A gentle, good creature she was, and lived different from her sister—the dark one. She's a lady who will have her way—if ever there was one—"

"The dark one? It is the dark one who is dead."

"Oh! no, sir. The one who is dead is the light-haired one—"

"Oh! Lord," said Frank; "I'm losing my wits, I think." and so walked away.

ACT III.

THERE are three years between each act of this play.

We are again in the modest flat inhabited by "the hero of the piece," who is now consequently six years older than when he returned to find the things smashed. They are all in order now—pictures in their place, pretty things stuck about, æsthetic table covers, books beautifully bound: all the indications of trained taste. In the dining-room sits a mother, with a baby on her lap and a little two-year-old—a plump, great-eyed ball of a boy—rolling about the floor. This mother is still quite young. She is also quite happy. She sings a song for the boy which appears to gratify the baby, who goes to sleep. She takes up her work and goes on with it, happy as a woman can be who lives in love and has every wish of her heart. Was there ever a time when a woman could be happier than such a woman as this, with such a lover for a husband and such children—acknowledged

by all the world to be the finest children that ever came into it?

It was a fine morning. The sunshine poured into the flat, which was otherwise not very cheerfully situated. There were days and whole weeks when it got no sun at all. There had been some social function the night before at which best frocks were worn and smiling faces encountered. And the dear children were perfectly well. Of course she was happy. The maid brought her a card. The name was unknown to her—Miss—Something.

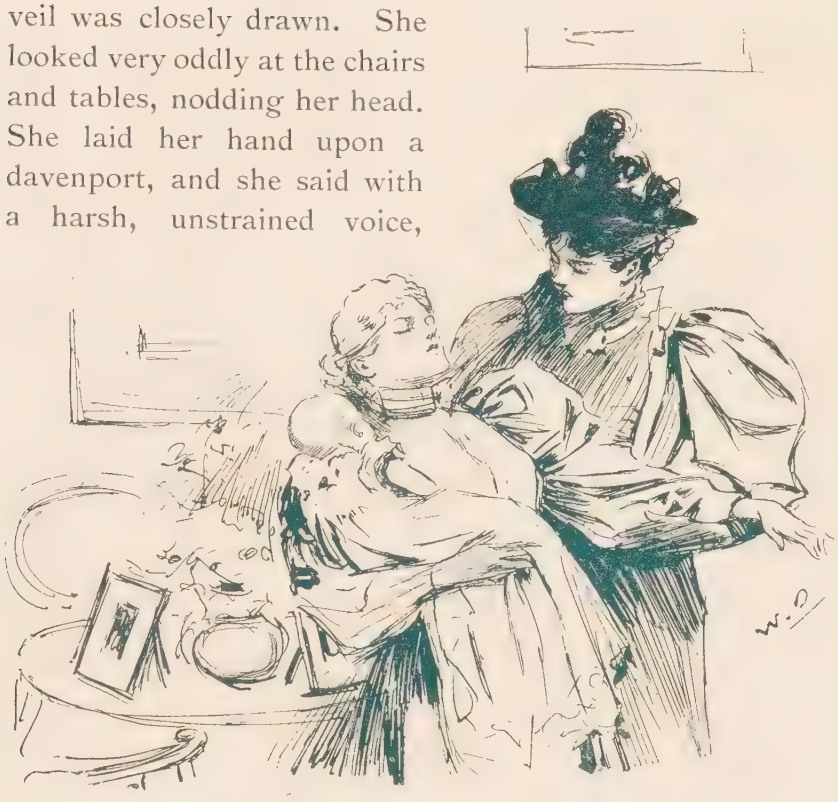
"She's a lady, ma'am," said the servant.

"Very well. Show her in here."

The visitor came in slowly, looking about the room. Her

"She's a lady, ma'am," said the servant.

veil was closely drawn. She looked very oddly at the chairs and tables, nodding her head. She laid her hand upon a davenport, and she said with a harsh, unstrained voice,



She would have fallen but that the other woman caught her.

"Mine." Then she laid her hand upon the couch; "Mine," she said. And upon the overmantel; "Mine," she said. Then she turned her face to the wife. "Red hair!" she said; "I knew it."

"What do you want? Who are you?"

"Your name, I believe, is Beatrice. I know you by your red hair. I wonder if you know me."

She lifted her veil, and showed her face—dark of skin, with flaming black eyes and flaming cheeks.

"Know you? Know you?" Beatrice sprang to her feet,

clutching her baby. "You—you—you are—Oh!—you are his first wife! But you are dead—dead—you are dead."

"Feel me. Is that the arm of a dead woman?"

"You are not dead! Then, in the name of God, what am I, and what are my children?"

She turned white; she reeled; she would have fallen but that the other woman—the dead wife—caught her and gently placed her in the chair.

"I thought," said the *revenant*, "that the time would come when I should have my revenge. It has come. He is happy; you are happy; there are the children"——

"Oh! The children! The children!" The poor mother caught up the boy from the floor, and held them both in her arms. "You would have your revenge upon the poor, innocent children! What have they done to you? What have I done to you? I never spoke to you. I never saw you except when you came to the lectures."

"It is on him that I will be revenged."

"How has he ever injured you?"

"He made love to you when he had a wife at home."

"He make love to me—then? In your lifetime? What sort of creature do you take me for? He make love to me—then? What can you think of him, then?"

The jealous woman, *femina furens,* was shaken. She looked at the mother with the children, and she weakened.

"I must have my revenge," she said, but feebly, considering the force of the words. "I will have my revenge."

"Then take and kill the children." The mother placed the baby in the "dead" wife's arms, and laid the boy at her feet. "Kill the children. I would rather have them dead than grow up with a curse for their father, and scorn for their

The woman with the red hair.

mother, and the stigma of their birth to drag them down. Kill them at once, I say. So you will revenge yourself upon him too, for he will have nothing left—no living thing to love, and only you to hate."

"Take your children back—you—you—woman with the red hair—the Venetian red hair," she said. "Take them back."

She almost threw the baby into its mother's arms, and sat down and thought for awhile, covering her face with her hand. But the tears fell through the fingers.

"Oh!" cried the mother, falling at her feet and laying hold of her knees, as they used to do in Greek tragedy. "For the children! For the innocent children! For God's sake, go away—go away!"

The woman was vindictive and full of hate. She had come to scatter woes around; but at the sight of the children her heart softened. If she had had but one child, how different would the world have been to her.

"I must punish him," she said. "I must—I must! Oh! I have suffered too much. I must punish him."

"What has he done? He thought you dead."

"He rejoiced to think that I was dead. He came to rejoice over my grave." The other wife rose. "Well, I will not punish the children. They are innocent. I will punish

"For the innocent children! For God's sake, go away—go away!"

him through you. See now. You know what you are and what your children are. I know. He shall know too."

"What do you mean?"

"I will go away. I promise you never to return, never to communicate with you, never to say or do anything that may reveal the truth. Where I am living no one knows me. I live alone, and think of this great wrong." Her bosom heaved; her eyes brightened again. The living wife trembled, because these looked like signs of another storm. But they passed. She restrained herself. "Do not fear me," she said; "but on one condition."

"Oh! any conditions—any!"

"I live alone, and think of this great wrong."

"It is that you tell him exactly what has happened. Promise to tell your husband that I am not dead, but living. It was my sister, who took my name for better concealment before she died. Tell him. If he makes no change, he will know—you will both know—what you are. But the children will not know. If he parts from you, the children will never know why. Do you perceive?"

"I promise. I will tell him."

The dead wife lowered her veil again, and left the room. The living wife heard her footsteps on the stairs, and opened the window and watched her walking swiftly down the street. She turned the corner, and was gone.

"Oh! my children! my children!" The mother clasped them to her bosom.

At six o'clock the husband came home. He entered with

The living wife watched her walking swiftly down the street.

the light step of the lover, and with a smile and a kiss. He told his wife to put on her bonnet, and took her for a stroll in the Gardens. At half-past seven they sat down to dinner. He was full of happiness and animation. He wondered why she was so grave and silent.

All the evening she sat watching him as he turned over proofs and made notes of work.

At eleven o'clock she left him. "Why," she said to herself, alone in her room—"why should I make him unhappy? That horrible woman will never come back. She will keep her promise. As for me, it is enough that I know the secret. I will never tell him—never!"

All the evening she sat watching him.

REFUSE ALL

AWARDED 30 GOLD MEDALS FOR SUPERIOR QUALITY.

SUBSTITUTES.

MOIR'S TABLE JELLY POWDER

Marmalade, Jams, Sauces, Pickles, Tart Fruits,

Potted Meats, Pâtés, Ox Tongues, Etc.

(PATENTED)
In Pink Packets. 12 Flavours.
A DELICIOUS JELLY MADE IN HALF A MINUTE.

Moir's Soups

In Glass Bottles and Tins.
Pints and Quarts.

To be had of all Grocers and Stores throughout the World.

JOHN MOIR & SONS, LTD., LONDON, ABERDEEN, AND SEVILLE.

C. BRANDAUER & CO.'S

CIRCULAR POINTED PENS.

NEITHER SCRATCH NOR SPURT.

This celebrated Series of Pens write as smoothly as a lead pencil, and neither scratch nor spurt, the points being rounded by a special process.

Assorted Sample Box for Seven Stamps to the Works, Birmingham.

Imitated but Unexcelled.

ASK YOUR GROCER FOR
PLUMTREE'S HOME-POTTED MEATS
DELICATE IN FLAVOUR. SUPERIOR IN QUALITY.
FOR THE BREAKFAST, LUNCHEON, TEA AND SUPPER TABLE.
THE BEST OF ALL ADVERTISEMENTS IS A PERSONAL RECOMMENDATION.
OF ALL GROCERS. IN WHITE EARTHENWARE JARS BEARING THE REGISTERED LABEL AND SIGNATURE "PLUMTREE" SOUTHPORT.

Do not fail to ask your Grocer TO-DAY for

PLUMTREE'S HOME-POTTED MEATS.

Sample Jar, post free, 7½d. or 1s. 3d.

PLUMTREE, Southport.

Used in all countries for over 70 years.

JEWSBURY AND BROWN'S ORIENTAL TOOTH PASTE.

White Sound Teeth.
Healthy Gums.
Fragrant Breath.

Beware of Counterfeits.

THE ONLY GENUINE IS SIGNED "JEWSBURY & BROWN."

NOVELS by Sir Walter Besant and James Rice.

Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 3s. 6d. each; post 8vo, illustrated boards, 2s. each; cloth limp, 2s. 6d. each.

Ready-Money Mortiboy.
My Little Girl.
With Harp and Crown.
This Son of Vulcan.
The Golden Butterfly.
The Monks of Thelema.
By Celia's Arbour.
The Chaplain of the Fleet.
The Seamy Side.
The Case of Mr. Lucraft, &c.
'Twas in Trafalgar's Bay, &c.
The Ten Years' Tenant, &c.

** There is also a LIBRARY EDITION of the above Twelve Volumes, handsomely set in new type on a large crown 8vo page, and bound in cloth extra, 6s. each; and a POPULAR EDITION of *The Golden Butterfly*, medium 8vo, 6d.; cloth, 1s. NEW EDITIONS, printed in large type on crown 8vo laid paper, bound in figured cloth, 3s. 6d. each, are also in the press.

NOVELS by SIR WALTER BESANT.

Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 3s. 6d. each; post 8vo, illustrated boards, 2s. each; cloth limp, 2s. 6d. each.

All Sorts and Conditions of Men. With 12 Illustrations by FRED. BARNARD.
The Captains' Room, &c. With Frontispiece by E. J. WHEELER.
All in a Garden Fair. With 6 Illustrations by HARRY FURNISS.
Dorothy Forster. With Frontispiece by CHARLES GREEN.
Uncle Jack, and other Stories.
Children of Gibeon.
The World Went Very Well Then. With 12 Illustrations by A. FORESTIER.
Herr Paulus: His Rise, his Greatness, and his Fall.
The Bell of St. Paul's.
For Faith and Freedom. With Illustrations by A. FORESTIER and F. WADDY.
To Call Her Mine, &c. With 9 Illustrations by A. FORESTIER.
The Holy Rose, &c. With Frontispiece by F. BARNARD.
Armorel of Lyonesse: A Romance of To-day. With 12 Illustrations by F. BARNARD.
St. Katherine's by the Tower. With 12 Illustrations by C. GREEN.
Verbena Camellia Stephanotis, &c. With a Frontispiece by GORDON BROWNE.
The Ivory Gate.
The Rebel Queen.

Beyond the Dreams of Avarice. Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 6s.
In Deacon's Orders, &c. With Frontispiece by A. FORESTIER. Crown 8vo, cloth, 6s.

Fifty Years Ago. With 144 Plates and Woodcuts. Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 5s.
The Eulogy of Richard Jefferies. With Portrait. Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 6s.
London. With 125 Illustrations. Demy 8vo, cloth extra, 7s. 6d.
Westminster. With Etched Frontispiece by F. S. WALKER, R.P.E., and 130 Illustrations by WILLIAM PATTEN, and others. Demy 8vo, cloth, 18s.
Sir Richard Whittington. With Frontispiece. Crown 8vo, art linen, 3s. 6d.
Gaspard de Coligny. With a Portrait. Crown 8vo, art linen, 3s. 6d.

London: CHATTO & WINDUS, Piccadilly.

Do you Admire Sport? Do you Know London?
Have you Explored our Coasts? Are you fond of Travel?

NOW PUBLISHING.

The Sportfolio.

Portraits and Biographies of the Heroes and Heroines of Sport and Pastime.

To be completed in 12 Parts, 6d. each; by post, 8d.

NOW PUBLISHING.

Round London.

An Album of Pictures from Photographs of the famous Streets, Remarkable Features and Buildings, and Beautiful Spots in and around the Metropolis.

To be completed in 12 parts, 6d. each; by post, 8d.

THE TWO BEST GIFT BOOKS OF THE SEASON.

Round the Coast.

An Album of Pictures from recent Photographs of all the Beautiful Watering Places and Resorts in the United Kingdom.

In twelve 6d. Parts, or in One handsome Vol., gilt edges, 10s. 6d.

The really prodigious success of "ROUND THE WORLD"—the first work of this kind we produced—has induced us—we might almost say compelled us—to issue a somewhat similar work, illustrating not merely the far-famed seaside resorts of England, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales, but also many beautiful little nooks and villages by the sea that are out of the beaten track and far from the haunts of those who dwell in cities. Each part of this exquisite work costs but sixpence, and contains twenty-four most beautiful views reproduced from photographs. By means of this Album you may, as it were, make a complete tour of the British Coast without moving farther than your own drawing-room. With this work before you, you may re-call memories of happy days spent by the sea, or, to be more practical, you can definitely decide whither you will fly for your much-needed rest.

Round the World.

From London Bridge to Charing Cross, via Yokohama. An Album of Splendid Views from Photographs of principal places en route.

The Cheapest, Most Valuable, and Most Unique Book ever Published.

In twelve 6d. parts, or in One handsome Vol., gilt edges, 10s. 6d.

This extraordinary work was prepared at an enormous cost, and is, therefore, infinitely to be preferred before execrable imitations. Each number contains 24 superb photographic views of the famous cities of the world, reproduced on splendid paper, and exquisitely printed. Beneath each view appears a letterpress description compiled by a well-known writer from information supplied direct to him by eminent travellers.

The views are arranged in proper sequence, and marvellously exact details are given as to the mode of travel. This is the specially unique feature of the work to which we would draw the attention of every class of the community, because a perusal of the volume, or of the complete 12 parts, is positively equal to the most expensive tour round the globe. As a fact, no tour extant embraces one half of the places that figure in the album. Thus it is obvious that a copy should be found in every home and school, for it is, indeed, geography and travel made easy.

GEO. NEWNES, Ltd., London, W.C. AT ALL STATIONERS, NEWSAGENTS, OR BOOKSTALLS.